

Session 13-19, a Regular Meeting of the Homer City Council was called to order on September 23, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Mary E. Wythe at the Homer City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Ave, Homer, Alaska, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PRESENT:** COUNCILMEMBERS: BURGESS, HOWARD, LEWIS, ROBERTS, ZAK

ABSENT: DOLMA (excused)

STAFF: CITY MANAGER WREDE  
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN  
PORT DIRECTOR/HARBORMASTER HAWKINS  
FINANCE DIRECTOR LI  
CITY PLANNER ABOUD  
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
COORDINATOR KOESTER

Council met as a Committee of the Whole from 5:00 p.m. to 5:41 p.m. to discuss Consent Agenda and Regular Meeting Agenda items.

Department Heads may be called upon from time to time to participate via teleconference.

#### **AGENDA APPROVAL**

(Addition of items to or removing items from the agenda will be by unanimous consent of the Council. HCC 1.24.040.)

The following changes were made to the agenda:

**Consent Agenda** Written Public Comment for Resolution 13-096 Requesting the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly Amend the Agreement between the Borough and the City Regarding the Transfer of Owner ship of the Old Middle School Property to Permit the City to Sell the Property and Use the Proceed for Public Purpose if the Council Deems it to be in the Public Interest; **Commission Reports** Memorandum 13-136 from Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Re: HERC Site; **Public Hearings** Memorandum 13-134 from City Planner, Backup to Ordinance 13-37 An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer Alaska Amending the Definition of Discontinued in Homer City Code 21.61.015, Definitions, to Exclude from the Time for Which a Nonconforming Use May Cease the Time From the Death of its Operator Until the Use is Legally Available to Transfer to a Successor Operator; **City Manager's Report** Kodiak Island Borough Resolution Regarding Tustumena Replacement Fund; and Pending Business Memorandum 13-135 From Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission for Resolution 13-040 Directing City Administration to Terminate All Survey , Design, and Cost Estimating Work on the Kachemak Drive Pathway.

Mayor Wythe called for a motion for the approval of the agenda as amended.

HOWARD/ROBERTS – SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: YES. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA**

Kathy Hill, city resident, commented in support of Resolution 13-095. She has a glimmer of hope regarding the HERC gym. She acknowledged that indoor recreation space is at a premium in our community and in her opinion the gym should be saved. It makes no sense to her to tear down the building then search for a huge amount of dollars to build a new one. Let's figure out a way to renovate it and keep it functioning for many more years. It is known that the school district can ask the community recreation programs to vacate their facilities, and with the demolition of the HERC gym, there would be no place to go. She questioned if the HERC gym could be integrated with the new public safety building and be used as a community facility as well. In her research she found two grants that appear to be geared toward recreation facility renovation, one is the State administered Community Development Block Grant sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the other is the Community Facilities Grant funded by the Department of Agriculture. She asked that Council please consider saving the HERC gym for our community.

Doug Dodd, city resident, thanked Mike Illg, City Administration, City Council, and the Mayor for making the HERC gym available for pickle ball over the past year. If that venue had not been available, he would not have participated at the International Senior Games in Fairbanks last month. Mr. Dodd acknowledged the economic benefits that accrue through community recreation and told Council about a retired couple from Fairbanks who came to visit in their motorhome for a week or so before moving on, but stayed for two months, regularly participating in the Pickle Ball games. The decision of how to best use the HERC gym and property is important with lasting consequences and should be made after an open discussion involving all the stakeholders. It would be best to do this through facilitated public hearings, not during regular council meetings. He thanked Council for their time, for making the HERC available for the past year, and for allowing Pickle Ball to continue while the issues surrounding the HERC are resolved.

Scott Adams, city resident by annexation, commented that he would like to see the fire department and police department proposal be put to the voters of the City of Homer. They did so for the city hall and he thinks they would get an outstanding idea of how people feel about what they are planning to do. It's a prime location and the value of the property could be better used than putting a fire and police department. His mom lives in Chatham, Mass, and their population is more than Homer and they have less police force, fire department, and less government than we do. He would like to see the City Council step back and review this. With the upcoming election there will be some change on Council and he would like to see any action taken after the election. He fears the way this council is going will break us all. Realistically we will be taxed for this.

### **RECONSIDERATION**

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

(Items listed below will be enacted by one motion. If separate discussion is desired on an item, that item may be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Meeting Agenda at the request of a Councilmember.)

A. Homer City Council unapproved Regular meeting minutes of September 9, 2013. City Clerk. Recommend adoption.

B. **Resolution 13-092**, A Resolution of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Amending the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Bylaws, Regular Meetings, Establishing a Meeting Time Limit of 8:00 p.m. City Clerk/Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission. Recommend adoption.

Memorandum 13-132 from Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission as backup.

C. **Resolution 13-093**, A Resolution of the Homer City Council Amending the Procurement Policy and Procedures Manual to Increase Limits for Purchase Orders. City Manager/Finance Director. Recommend adoption.

D. **Resolution 13-094**, A Resolution of the Homer City Council Recognizing and Thanking the Alaska State Fire Chiefs Association for Submitting the Statewide Grant to Upgrade Firefighting Equipment for the Homer Volunteer Fire Department. City Manager/Fire Chief. Recommend adoption.

E. **Resolution 13-095**, A Resolution of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Authorizing the City Manager to Keep the Homer Education and Recreation Complex (HERC) Gym Open for Pickleball and Other Community Recreation Programs that Require Only Minimal Heat and Utilities, Until Such Time as the Building is Demolished. Lewis. Recommend adoption.

F. **Resolution 13-096**, A Resolution of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Requesting that the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly Amend the Agreement Between the Borough and the City Regarding the Transfer of Ownership of the Old Middle School Property to Permit the City to Sell the Property and Use the Proceeds for a Public Purpose if the Council Deems it to Be in the Public Interest to Do So. Howard. Recommend adoption.

Memorandum from City Attorney as backup.

Councilmember Lewis requested Resolution 13-096 be moved to Resolutions.

Mayor Wythe called for a motion for the approval of the consent agenda as amended.

LEWIS/ZAK SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: YES. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

#### **VISITORS**

A. **Beth Cumming**, Kachemak Drive Non-Motorized Path Group, 10 minutes.

Beth Cumming, Lynn Burt, and Kevin Walker were present to comment to the Council about the Kachemak Drive Non-Motorized Path Group.

Beth Cumming said the group's first request is to turn down Resolution 13-040, second is allocate additional funds from HART to complete the survey as was laid out in Resolution 12-079, third they would like Council to show support for this project. It now appears it may be a state project since a title check shows the land in question is owned by the state. Some thoughts expressed about tonight's resolution are that it cuts out the possibility of any request for HART funding relative to the proposed Kachemak Drive Path. If it's a state project this could be a moot point. Another thought is that it's negative and unnecessary since the city has no financial obligations to the group beyond completion of the survey. Additionally this resolution is like a door slammed in the face in terms of encouraging other grass roots groups to go to the city with their ideas for addressing a public need they perceive as critical. The group is offering to provide matching funds to go with additional HART funds to complete the survey. One way for the city to show support is to provide half the cost of completing the survey. They will now be approaching a state agency in their attempt to provide the path, and offering memorandums would help show support as well.

Lynn Burt said they are here tonight to introduce themselves as HAT, Homer Area Trails. HAT is a tax exempt non-profit under the Homer Foundation. There is a bank account in place which will allow HAT to acquire and distribute funds. HAT is asking the City of Homer's permission to build, with volunteer labor, a level 1 or 2 trail on the first half mile of Kachemak Drive starting at the Y off of the Mud Bay Trail, up through the woods to Homer Airport long term parking, since this section poses the greatest challenge. It happened this summer that the airport required trees to be cut for the western approach of the airport runway. This is the hillside where HAT wants to put the trail. She cited a letter from City Manager Wrede to the Airport Manager appreciating DOTPF's concern about safety at the airport, and that section of road is the most dangerous section of road for bicyclist and pedestrians. A separated bike path on the south side of the road in that location would greatly enhance public safety. Ms. Burt continued that the trail is now more doable because of the tree removal. Please vote down resolution 13-040, they are confident that the trail section of the first half mile can be built inexpensively with volunteer labor doing 90% of the work. All they need for now is the city's expression of support. She shared a comment from Lindiann Sarno that if she were on the council and a group of volunteers devoted hundreds of hours to to a trail project that will increase public safety and organizing volunteers to do the trail work, I would say thank you.

Kevin Walker commented that they found an 8% grade in the middle section they want to build and they have a good start at engineering. He's done a cost estimate loosely based on Nelson Engineering's for a level 1 or 2 trail, coming out at a tenth of their cost. He estimates \$35,000. They want to keep this rolling and ask for councils support.

Discussion ensued regarding whether or not any of the funds allocated in Resolution 12-079 were still available, but weren't able to determine at the time.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRESENTATIONS/BOROUGH REPORT/COMMISSION REPORTS**

- A. Borough Report
- B. Commissions/Board Reports:

1. Library Advisory Board
2. Homer Advisory Planning Commission
3. Economic Development Advisory Commission

Mike Barth, Economic Development Advisory Commissioner, gave the Council a brief overview of the Commission's activity including weighing on the Capital Improvement Plan, and discussion of Town Center and the need for an anchor tenant. He explained that CIRI is a key land owner in the town center and they believe it would be good to find out what they may have planned for their land. The group has also addressed affordable housing with a focus on the challenges for Coast Guard housing. Mr. Barth advised that there will be a bylaw amendment coming before Council soon to add the Chamber Director as a non-voting member.

Mayor Wythe suggested including a Marine Trades seat as well.

4. Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

Robert Archibald, Parks and Recreation Advisory Commissioner, commented that the Alaska Recreational Parks Association held its annual meeting in Juneau where Mike Illg gave a presentation on Professional Certification and Commissioner Matt Steffy conducted a session on Schoolyard Habitat using West Homer Elementary as an example. At the award ceremony Homer Hockey Association was awarded the 2012 Outstanding Organization Award in recognition of its success as a non-profit organization, one of only four such organizations in the U.S. Mr. Illg and Mr. Steffy invited the Association to hold their 2015 meeting in Homer. The Commission talked with the Old Town group about a sign and statue at Bishop Beach. They sent several memos to Council regarding Resolution 12-040, and requesting Council support to use HERC site for recreation and education.

5. Port and Harbor Advisory Commission

## **PUBLIC HEARING(S)**

- A. **Ordinance 13-37**, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Amending the Definition of "Discontinued" in Homer City Code 21.61.015, Definitions, to Exclude From the Time for Which a Nonconforming Use May Cease the Time From the Death of Its Operator Until the Use is Legally Available for Transfer to a Successor Operator. Mayor/CityManager. Introduction August 26, 2013, Referred to Planning Commission for Their September 18, 2013 Meeting, Public Hearing and Second Reading September 23, 2013.

Memorandum 13-126 from City Manager as backup.

Mayor Wythe opened the public hearing and there was no public comment.

Mayor Wythe called for the adoption of Ordinance 13-37 by reading of title only for second and final reading.

ZAK/ROBERTS SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NO: ROBERTS, ZAK, HOWARD, BURGESS, LEWIS

Motion fails.

- B. **Ordinance 13-38**, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Amending the FY 2013 Capital Budget by Appropriating \$300,000 From a Combination of the Fire Department, Police Department, and General Depreciation Reserve Funds to Begin Preliminary Engineering and Design Work on the Proposed New Public Safety Building. Mayor/City Council. Introduction September 9, 2013, Public Hearing and Second Reading September 23, 2013.

**Ordinance 13-38(S)**, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Amending the FY 2013 Capital Budget by Appropriating \$300,000 From a Combination of the Fire Department, Police Department, and General Depreciation Reserve Funds to Begin Preliminary Engineering and Design Work on the Proposed New Public Safety Building. Mayor/City Council.

Memorandum 13-129 from City Manager as backup.

Mayor Wythe opened the public hearing.

Justin Arnold, city resident, commented at a prior meeting Councilmember Burgess brought up a point that we can use the fire hall for community rec. Mr. Arnold said we already have a building, a school house, with one of two wood basketball courts that we can use. He understands there is asbestos in the building and it raises a lot of problems, but why are we moving forward with a new fire hall and police station, spending \$300,000 for planning. He commented that when they did the new bumpers on the Deep Water Dock, planning and engineering cost twice as much as putting the bumpers on. He doesn't see why we are moving forward with a new building when we could easily, and hopefully cheaply, renovate the buildings and structures that are next to each other already. He questions why we would tear down a building that is going to be expensive. He doesn't understand why we are moving forward with this. He thinks there needs to be a lot more thought into what we're doing here.

Corbin Arno, city resident, said he also believes this is being rushed. One day Council saying the police department is understaffed and there isn't money to hire more staff. The next meeting you want to spend \$15 million on a brand new building, that is three or four times larger. It will take more staff to take care of the building, and more money. He thinks they need to take some more public comment before they rush this thing through. He doesn't think it's a good idea.

Scott Adams, city resident, commented that his insurance rate will go up if they do this because it will move him one mile further from the fire department. He wonders how many other people would be affected by moving the fire department to the proposed site. He thinks they should hold off on this and let other people decide, other than the six or seven of them. He knows we voted the Council in, but this seems to be a big issue and needs more people involved.

There were no further comments and Mayor Wythe closed the public hearing.

Mayor Wythe called or a motion to substitute Ordinance 13-38(S) for Ordinance 13-38.

LEWIS/ROBERTS SO MOVED.

There was no discussion for the substitution.

VOTE: YES. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Mayor Wythe called for the adoption of Ordinance 13-38(S) by reading of title only for second and final reading.

HOWARD/ROBERTS SO MOVED.

Councilmember Lewis commented the Council held their worksession on August 17 where they chose their list for the CIP and one of the reasons they selected the police and fire department as it is push by legislature to fund that. If we are going to put things on the list, it needs to be things they are interested in funding. It is his understanding the study they requested will also look at a second location off Main Street.

ZAK/BURGESS MOVED TO AMEND LINE 9 TO ADD AFTER POLICE DEPARTMENT **RECREATIONAL DEPARTMENT** AND ON LINE 11 ADD PUBLIC SAFETY/**RECREATIONAL BUILDING**.

Councilmember Zak explained that this is the design stage and that way we can open it up for the public input on whether it should be fire and police, and/or recreation.

There were comments from other Councilmembers that they understand the intent of the amendment, this wasn't their intent when they chose their CIP items. They have other options for the recreational center as they have previously discussed.

VOTE: YES: ZAK, BURGESS

NO: LEWIS, ROBERTS, HOWARD

Motion failed.

Councilmember Burgess recognized the comments from the two City Council candidates and said it is easy to look from afar and observe the City Council as people who make decisions on whim and don't give consideration to all these things. But the decision to put a public safety building up in Homer is the result of a very long process. Our police and fire station are grossly undersized. Our firefighting equipment gets the abuse of elements and lack of functionality because it can't be stored in a warm spot which means reduced response time, which means we spend more money on upgrades and maintenance to the equipment. There have been some slow response times, especially in the winter, which is a reason they decided to do a fire station up on Skyline. The police station right now has almost nonexistent jail facilities. We pay money to the state and have to move a lot of inmates up to Wildwood in Kenai, resulting in more dollars leaving the City. Ultimately when they design the CIP list they are looking at what they think the legislature can give the City money for. All of the money to build the facility isn't going to come out of the tax payers' pockets, but with monies they think they can get from state and federal organizations, as well as the legislature. The Council has considered

lots of variables and alternatives regarding location, and the HERC site is the most cost effective site to develop which is one of the reasons they arrived at that situation. The HERC building itself is filled with asbestos, is very expensive to maintain, and we all love community recreation, but we have to weigh the cost versus benefit of budgetary decisions. Lots of thinking goes into this figure, they want public input, but if people want to participate in the process they need to bring informed dialog to the process.

Mayor Wythe added that this is proposed as a five year program, there is nothing about it that is going to be quick. Having it organized for 2015 consideration by Legislature is the objective Council is working on now. The City's match, or contribution is the introduction of design with the hope of drawing in the additional funds throughout the process. The anticipation is a 2016-17 construction season and 2018 occupancy.

VOTE: YES. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Mayor Wythe called for a five minute break at 7:08 p.m. The meeting resumed at 7:14 p.m.

## **ORDINANCE(S)**

### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

#### A. City Manager's Report

City Manager Wrede commented about the Kodiak Island Borough Resolution regarding the Tustumena included in the supplemental packet and advised that a resolution to the Council is forthcoming. He reminded the public that the new public restrooms are being built with cruise ship head tax funds and City staff is working to address the maintenance aspect. He advised the Council of Buccaneer's interest in wintering the drill rig Endeavor at the harbor. Lastly he reported that the City was successful getting a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for more work at Hornaday Park.

Mayor Wythe commented in support of the contract with Buccaneer, Homer has an active port and we are open for business.

Councilmember Howard asked about the status of the Economic Benefit Report from the drill rig, and was advised that the report is still pending from Northern Economics because they are waiting for information from Buccaneer.

Councilmember Lewis asked about year round access to the new public bathrooms. City Manager Wrede said they are still working to make that decision.

Councilmember Zak expressed his hope that if the rig comes back some of the monies will go to the Homer Foundation as they did last time.

Councilmember Burgess reiterated the need to get the ball moving on annexing what part of the harbor area waters the City will want for future use and expansion.

Councilmember Roberts agreed with City Manager Wrede's suggestion of a building committee for the public safety building, as this process has worked well in the past. She also found the information about funding from FEMA for new emergency operation centers and states interest in helping with the jail.

- B. Bid Report

#### **CITY ATTORNEY REPORT**

#### **COMMITTEE REPORT**

- A. Public Arts Committee
- B. Transportation Advisory Committee
- C. Permanent Fund Committee
- D. Lease Committee
- E. Port and Harbor Improvement Committee
- F. Employee Committee Report
- G. Port and Harbor Building Task Force

Councilmember Howard reported the next Task Force meeting is October 21<sup>st</sup> to look at 25% conceptual design plans. At their last meeting they identified user groups of the facility and responsibilities of harbor staff; it was quite a lengthy and impressive list of tasks that the harbor staff performs. They will be setting two public hearing dates in November trying to make sure everyone involved with this building has a chance to learn about it and offer input.

#### **PENDING BUSINESS**

- A. **Resolution 13-040**, A Resolution of the Homer City Council Directing the City Administration to Terminate All Survey, Design, and Cost Estimating Work on the Kachemak Drive Pathway. Mayor. (Postponed from April 22, 2013.)

Memorandum 13-059 from Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission as backup.

The motion on the floor from April 22, 2013 is as follows:

LEWIS/HOWARD SO MOVED FOR THE ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION 13-040 BY READING OF TITLE ONLY.

LEWIS/ROBERTS MOVED TO AMEND LINE 30 REMOVE CITY ADMINISTRATION, LINE 31 REMOVE THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION.

Councilmember Lewis said he doesn't think they should stop all work on the path, he thinks it's important and it would be nice to have a trail connecting the East End trail to the base of the spit. He would like to see a plan that addresses the whole trail and he doesn't think we should stop work on it.

There was discussion that this resolution isn't the appropriate ways to show support to the State regarding the trail on State property.

VOTE: YES: LEWIS

NO: BURGESS, ROBERTS, ZAK, HOWARD

Motion failed.

There was no further discussion on the main motion.

VOTE: YES: HOWARD

NO: BURGESS, LEWIS, ROBERTS, ZAK

Motion fails.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **RESOLUTIONS**

- A. **Resolution 13-096**, A Resolution of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Requesting that the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly Amend the Agreement Between the Borough and the City Regarding the Transfer of Ownership of the Old Middle School Property to Permit the City to Sell the Property and Use the Proceeds for a Public Purpose if the Council Deems it to Be in the Public Interest to Do So. Howard.

Mayor Wythe called for a motion for the adoption of Resolution 13-096 by reading of title only.

HOWARD/ZAK SO MOVED.

Councilmember Howard explained that she is asking for the Borough to give them the right to sell the property, should they feel they need to should they locate the public safety building someplace else. It doesn't mean they are going to sell it, but it puts more options on the table that belong to the City. Right now their hands are tied. They can't sell it and there are specific ways to use the building. It is an expensive building and we have to do something with it.

There was brief discussion whether there were more deed restrictions. City Manager Wrede was unsure, but Attorney Klinkner has concluded that the only restrictions that are still in place are the two listed.

Councilmember Lewis commented that he isn't in favor of getting rid of any city land. It's easy to say we won't sell it, but a future council might. If we have this land we should hold it because it's a prime piece. If it isn't going to be used for fire and police, we may find a recreational use.

Councilmember Burgess thinks it is better to empower this or any future council to have as many options at their disposal as possible. He doesn't like the idea of selling the parcel and leasing or other

uses could be advantageous to the community, but he doesn't see a reason why they shouldn't seek the possibility to be more flexible with the options.

VOTE: YES: ZAK, HOWARD, BURGESS, ROBERTS  
NO: LEWIS

Motion carried.

### **COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

Kathy Hill thanked the Council for their support tonight and invited them to observe or play pickle ball some time.

Public Works Director Meyer responded to a comment that was made about how much money was spent to plan and design new fenders on the Deep Water Dock. He thinks the suggestion was that we spent twice as much on planning and design as we did on construction. He explained that he will not recommend to the City Manager to sign a contract that represents spending any more than ten percent of a construction cost for design and planning. When it comes to the Deep Water Dock we had a very effective engineer do the design of the project which we spent between five and six percent of the cost of the design. He just wanted to clarify that they try to spend the communities money as if it were our own, and to get the best bang for the buck that they can.

Mike Barth, city resident, commented regarding the HERC and public safety building. He encouraged everyone to evaluate the priorities. He doesn't think there is any question they both are needed at some point. For him rushing into a public safety building might be kind of a near sighted decision because he doesn't know that it's an immediate need at this point, versus a recreational facility. The bottom line is the one there is not a viable option at this point, so an option needs to be provided. He noted Councilmember Burgess' comment about making sure we know what the usage is and the statistics. Mr. Barth said he doesn't know the statistics, but hopes Council has them. His wife Amanda said the building was used twice a week during the school year for toddler and preschool play group. She hopes there is a way to bring that group back, it was very busy and exactly what moms and dads needed to get out with their kids in the winter months. Coming back to priorities, both are needs and what's more important.

Beth Cumming, city resident, commented that she respects city staff, City Council, and the Mayor. They might be surprised to know how closely her philosophical outlook follows our Mayor's. She respects the person who didn't follow the survey as was requested last October. In a way she wants to offer an apology from herself. If it had occurred to her or other members of the proposed path group that we could reduce the proposal from a level 3 trail to a level 1 or 2 with some aspects of a level 3, we would not be sitting here tonight. She said she is a slow thinker and it never occurred to her. She acknowledged the request of Council for them to get specific. She wanted to give examples of prices they could have had, but felt they had to go through an acceptable city process. They had an offer of doing the engineering and survey by a licensed firm to do it for free. Because they hemmed and hawed they missed that opportunity. Secondly they did a title search and they paid from their pockets to have the title search done, and found the land belongs to the state.

Bonnie Jason, city resident, thanked the Council for keeping the HERC building open and available for Homer recreational enthusiasts. She hopes they will come for pickle ball. She encouraged the continuing support of the recreational movement in Homer. She hopes they will support the recreational needs assessment, she thinks it's a great opportunity.

Robert Archibald, city resident, commented that storing the jack up rigs on the spit might be interesting and provide funding for the harbor and the city. Earmarking some of that money for the Homer Foundation might make things a little more palatable. He thinks it's an excellent idea and hopes they consider it. He noted that they the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission will be losing the Chair, Bumpo Bremmicker, and they look forward to the appointment of Roger MacCampbell.

Chance Rockett, non-resident, commented regarding community recreation. He thinks the Council asked for public support and over the last three or four meetings, we have shown how important that is to Homer, more so than a lot of things. In research he doe, he sees how important the public safety building is, and the harbor are to Homer. He sees that getting grant money for a public safety building is more realistic than getting money for recreation. They are pursuing that and asking for everything they can, just like others would do for a recreation facility. He wants the public to know that we need to move on and not take stabs and think the City Council doesn't care about rec. He doesn't think that's the case, he thinks there are issues with people about the building being where the HERC building is. He thinks it is unrealistic to spent \$10 million to revamp the building, but he would like to point out that the gym could be a part of the actual plan for the public safety building. Maybe the gym, skate park, and basketball court could be saved and included with the building. Police and fire could benefit from having the gym as well. He thanked the Council for listening to them. They will continue to come for recreation. Recreation is needed. He was born and raised here and thinks the youth should be provided with more options besides academics and arts, he thinks that's a big hole.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE CITY ATTORNEY**

Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen reminded listeners that Election Day is October 1<sup>st</sup>, and absentee/early voting is available at the City Clerk's office for anyone who can't get to their polling place on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE CITY MANAGER**

City Manager Wrede clarified that it is not the intent to store the rig Endeavor at the Deep Water Dock, it is his understanding that the purpose is to perform maintenance starting November 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR**

Mayor Wythe thanked the candidates for attending and participating at the meetings this month, it shows sincere intent to learn what's going on. She wished them good luck at the polls. With regard to earlier comments about priorities, Mayor Wythe explained that the responsibility of a first class city first comes to safety and roads. The council has to meet those obligations before considering things like contributing funds for parks and recreation. This is an ongoing battle every year for the City of Homer. It becomes harder as our funds become more restricted. She has said this several times in the last couple years, the Council has reduced the budget for the City of Homer over \$3 million over the last eight and a half years, a huge reduction. In addition to that we are the only city on the peninsula

that honored the vote of the citizens to fully suspend the sales tax on food in the winter. Every other first class city on the peninsula suspended the borough portion but still collects their city tax. That was a substantial financial reduction to the city. When you reduce your city income by almost \$1 million of tax revenue, those are funds that could be had for keeping the library open more, providing parks and recreation facilities, much less a department for parks and rec. Those are all things we need to take into consideration as citizens when we vote on how we want our tax dollars to be reduced. No one, herself included, is interested in paying taxes, but she is interested in providing the money required by the community to provide those services that are important to her. That is what people lose when they think about not paying sales tax. Property tax will keep the basic services funded, and that's about it. Regarding the jack up rigs coming to Homer, for her, there is much more than money in the coffers of the community. She sees it when she drives down the hill and for her the conversation about the jack up rig being at a working harbor port in our community, if you can tell there is a jack up rig at the harbor, you aren't looking at the view anyway. She thanked everyone for coming out and looks forward to the upcoming elections. Everyone come out and vote.

### **COMMENTS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Councilmember Roberts commented about the Kachemak Drive Path, she didn't vote for the resolution, that doesn't mean she doesn't support the path, she just didn't think it was the right vehicle to proceed. She thinks they indicated they support it, it seems like there are more issues coming up. She is glad to see the people come and talk about recreation; she thinks it's an important part of the community. She also knows from looking at plenty of city budgets that the recreation doesn't pay for itself right now. For people asking for more recreation, citizens must be willing to start adding back the sales tax to the budget. We can't afford to do these things in recreation right now and she would like to think the public would start telling them that they want to spend some money toward recreation. She thinks adding sales tax back in the equation for food tax is a way that non city residents can contribute to the program. Lastly, good luck to everyone in the upcoming election.

Councilmember Zak thanked Ms. Cummings for coming here tonight and he doesn't think there is anything wrong with slow thinking, the fact that we are thinking is what matters. Over time there may be added pieces and facts that come out. He congratulated the Homer Area Trails nonprofit group. That's huge. He acknowledged Chance Rockett for coming out and taking notes. He said they are saving a little bit with paper reduction and using the tools. The citizens who come out and realize their voice is being heard is wonderful. When we have discussions tonight about budget considerations and if the Homer Foundation will see funds from the jack up rig, we are thinking about it and listening. Finally he likes pickles so he will have to come out and play pickle ball. He prefers the dill pickles.

Councilmember Burgess said he appreciated Mr. Rocketts comments, they were thoughtful and measured. He thinks the larger discussion about community recreation needs to be how do we establish a funding mechanism to support the program and a facility. There are a lot of people in the community who support recreation, he is one and a lot who sit at the table are. They don't want to tie their horse to a building that would be costly to remodel. We all need to expand our vision and think out of the box and long term about what the community really needs. Right now isn't that any one wants to get rid of recreation, it's that they have a real possibility of meeting one of the city's core long term needs in a public safety building. Police and fire are at the core of what a city needs to provide. They have the opportunity to seek funds for a facility that can meet the community's needs

for the next thirty plus years. We need to weigh those priorities and go after that money. If there is really the community will to have a larger discussion about recreation, let's talk about the funding mechanism. Let's talk about a borough wide service area to support the users outside the City. If we are really dedicated, let's talk about sales tax. Let's see what a budget for that is, see what we can build and support in a building and program. Instead of saying City Council want to take away our last vestiges of community recreation, we need to say how can we make it possible to have a long term plan, long term goal, and effective solution to the problem. He appreciates the rec groups who have started to figure this out and been talking to them about how to develop a long term strategy and vision to do that. He thinks this council will support them in doing that.

Councilmember Lewis said everyone should get out and vote. When he first got elected and the sales tax was on the ballot they had 28% voter turnout. 18% voted in favor of getting rid of the sales tax. An 18% majority of 28% made that decision. If you don't vote, then you won't things done. We need to have a good turnout; he would love to see 50 for 60 % of the registered voters voted. We aren't going to get anything done; we won't get recreation or a lot of things if people don't vote.

Councilmember Howard put forth a challenge to the community, that between now and July 2014, some sort of package is put together to say to the voters on the October 2014 ballot, do you want a recreation department and if so are you willing to tax yourself for it and in the meantime, have a needs assessment done. We don't really know what the need is. We aren't the bad guys, we just need to know what you want and how do you want to pay for it. Let's get something on target to make this happen so this time next year we will have something to vote yes on.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is Monday, October 14, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. and Committee of the Whole 5:00 p.m. A Special Meeting is scheduled for October 21, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

---

MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_